

Spirit testify and we will hear his voice. In speaking of the Spirit, Jesus says: "He shall not speak from himself; but what things soever he shall hear these shall he speak." John 16:13. R. V. This same Jesus says, "Take heed what ye hear." Mark 4:24.

When the Spirit testifies what he has heard from Jesus, we must receive his testimony, but when man testifies to what he has felt in his own heart, "Take heed." Man has testified, in relation to this "Definite experience," that "In regenerating the heart, the Holy Spirit produces a sensation in the mind or a change in the internal state of the body; and that this sensation, or joyous emotion is the evidence which we have that we have been converted."

We are certain that the Holy Spirit could produce such a disturbance in the mind, but judging from his character and mission as revealed in "The Word," we infer that he never did do the like.

This theory usually implies that one must go to an "altar" or "mourner's bench" and weep and pray until he experiences this peculiar feeling or sensation. We shall attempt to show further on why we believe that satan first suggested this pernicious doctrine; but for the present we shall examine this "definite experience," and discover, if possible, what it really is. If it's the work of the Spirit we ought to know it; and if not we ought to know it. Any movement of the mind or excitement of the sensibility is called an emotion, and of course depends upon certain ideas. Cutter tells us that, "When an idea is attended with some feeling, either pleasant or unpleasant, it is so far emotional; and when the feeling preponderates, the idea is obscured and the state of mind is then called an emotion, or when rising above the ordinary degree and becoming impatient of restraint, a passion."

Practically, the moment of culmination of feeling is the moment of perilous decisions and fatal mistakes.

While our happiness consists in emotions of joy, we must not mistake their source. An idea must always precede the emotion and therefore the emotion can not be an evidence of any thing except the idea. We do not doubt the existence of the idea; the man believes that he is saved and consequently rejoices. But if we prove the idea false then we prove the doctrine to be a fake.

Next, we will show that one can not tell from the sensibility alone whether the idea is suggested by the Holy Spirit or by satan. Let us take an example out side of religion. A and B put up a wager on a horse race. A being of a nervous temperament was very much excited while held in suspense awaiting results. Finally the porter announced that A's horse won the race. Imagine the scene. He jumped to his feet, shouted and leaped for joy. He could hardly contain himself. His emotions were intensely great. The mental rebound was wonderful! Many a man at the "altar" has been satisfied with

emotions not half so great. But alas, for A, the porter made a mistake; it was B's horse that won. Now, what did A's emotional feelings prove? Did they prove that he had gained anything? Did they prove that the porter told the truth? Nay, verily; they only prove that he believed something; and that something was false. This shows that the same, or greater emotions may be produced without the aid of the Holy Ghost; and for this reason emotions can not be taken as evidence of conversion. Imagine A's feelings when he discovered his mistake? He might have said: "I know I won the money because I feel like it;" but no, when he is confronted with the truth he is speechless. A sad spectacle! But not so sad as the following: "In that day," many who think they are saved, and have preached, cast out devils and done "mighty works" will be disappointed. Jesus will say, "Depart from me I never knew you." Matt. 7:21.

The doctrine of a "Definite experience," as is usually taught, is no where found in the Bible and is therefore one of those commandments of men. Matt. 15:9. A victim of this delusion believes that a certain amount of weeping, praying and mental depression are necessary before the Holy Spirit will regenerate his heart; and therefore he affects to afflict his soul in this way in hope of influencing the Spirit and gaining his favor. Think of it! By this means even the will is over-powered from the affection of grief. But when the desire for self-affliction is gratified, the will exerts itself, the natural desire for relief is augmented and the man immediately recovers.

The mental rebound, or "experience" is in proportion to the mental strain; and this depends not only upon his belief, but upon his peculiar notion of a "Definite experience." Physically, the man has lost considerable energy and gained nothing; he has only recovered from the misery brought upon himself. The mental depression he calls conviction; the rebound from it, conversion. But, O, his spiritual condition! We shall speak of this further on.

True, in some instances these people live exemplary lives, but in such cases it was the desire to obtain God's favor which wrought a reformation, and not the mental agitation experienced at the "altar."

"In a certain number of instances the emotional state exists only as a transition between opposites; the pleasure supposes a previous pain, and the pain a previous pleasure."—*Bain's Mental Science*.

Hence, according to this principle, to have those joyous emotions, relief must come while this supposed "conviction" is still painful; for after the system has had time to accommodate itself, there can be no reaction and consequently no joyous elation. It is the sudden transition between the two opposite states which impresses the mind. This is why so many fail to obtain that "Brilliant experience" which a few tell about.

The writer was once the victim of this in-

fernal doctrine; but by earnest prayer and close attention to God's word he was finally able to cut loose from its iron grasp and hear the voice of the Spirit.

But we would not think of disturbing the rest and sweet repose of this system's votaries were it not for the fact that their doctrine defeats the object of the great initiative ordinance of Christ's church. The Spirit testifies, by the apostle, that "Baptism saves us." I Peter 3:21.

Hence, if we are led by the Spirit, we know that, in some way, baptism saves us. "Who art thou, O vain man, that repliest against God!" The Spirit says that it saves us; and it is therefore a "Saving ordinance," no matter what man, angels or devils may say to the contrary.

But if one has experienced that mental transition at the "altar" and calls that conversion, there is no use talking to him about baptism being a "Saving ordinance," because he thinks he is saved without it and therefore it can not be a saving ordinance to him. "Take heed," take heed, O, vain man, "What ye hear." When one has been taught to expect relief in a certain mental depression, if his belief reaches the plain of his expectation relief comes in obedience to natural law. Behold, how effectually Christian scientists work this principle.

How long, O, Lord! how long shall such frauds be perpetrated in thy name?

"If it were possible," says Jesus, "they would deceive the very elect." But thank God it's not possible.

Just 1803 years after Christ was born, Rev. Dr. Chandler, a Methodist preacher, introduced the practice of calling sinners from the audience to the "altar" or communion rail. See *Methodism of the Peninsular*. Why this innovation? Did the Spirit suggest it, or did it come from the regions of darkness? But says one: "What harm can there be in it?" May we also ask, what good there is in it? There is a familiar stage in human experience when earthly allurements only serve to ruffle the mind and fan the flame of discontent. At this stage man's soul is feeling after God. From the heart he is crying, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Acts 2:37. O, that an angel would give him the next verse before the veil is drawn over his heart!

But no, the gospel has been given and he has neglected to read it; so he is called up before the audience where he becomes so excited and embarrassed that he does not know light from darkness, good from evil and could hardly speak his own name. In this condition he is expected to receive sufficient knowledge to tell to the world around—how to be "Born again."

Brethren, we've been there and know whereof we speak. We saw this evil long ago, but were afraid to attack it. But ever since the first gleam of light, "His word has been in our heart as a burning fire" and we are weary with forbearing.

Philosophers tell us that, in most minds, a